HOW TO READ THE PROGRAM MEASURES PAGES

The remainder of this report provides program measures displays for individual departments and their programs. Departments are presented alphabetically, and within a department, displays are arranged alphabetically by program and then by program element. Each program measures display presents measurement data for an individual program or an element of a program. The measures and other data contained in a program measures display provide a comprehensive overview of the given program (or program element) so that the linkage among the different measures can be seen in relation to the program's mission.

Actual performance data for the program or program element are displayed for FY02, FY03, FY04, and FY05. The FY05 BUDGET column shows projected results based on the approved FY05 budget, although in a few instances departments have used updated estimates of FY05 performance midway through the year (signified by the FY05 ESTIMATE column heading) rather than budget projections. The FY06 performance projections (the FY06 APPROVED column) assume a budget at the approved FY06 level. Because the County's accounting system does not track expenditures by program, it is sometimes difficult to determine the actual expenditures by a program or program element in any given fiscal year. In those cases where actual program expenditures are not available, the amount originally budgeted is used.

Some of the measures shown are new; some programs are still developing certain types of measures; and in some cases, prior year or projected results may not be available for certain measures. "NA" indicates that the results for a given program measure are not available for that year, while "TBD" signifies a new measure that is still "to be developed" or an established measure that cannot be reported at this time because of delays in the receipt of relevant information (e.g., the need to wait for data from the State of Maryland). "TBD" reflects a commitment by the department to provide results for the given program measure for the year shown.

The various entries in a program measures display are defined as follows:

Program: This identifies the departmental program being measured. A full description of these programs can be found in the department budget presentations in Volume 1 of the Approved FY06 Operating Budget and Public Services Program.

Program Element: In some cases, a departmental program is so all-encompassing that a more manageable part of the program must be used; this is referred to as a program element.

Program Mission: A broad statement of the purpose of a departmental program or program element – what the program is intended to accomplish, why it is being undertaken, and for whom it is undertaken (in other words, the reason for the program's existence).

Community Outcomes Supported: Broadly stated effects on the community as a whole. They may be the result of programs from several governmental organizations, as well as private sector activities.

Departmental Outcomes: The degree to which the overall mission of a department is being achieved. These may include program outcomes for a department's major programs, community outcomes that are especially salient for the given department, and/or outcomes that emerge from the effects of several of the department's programs.

(Program) Outcomes/Results: The direct results of a program or program element on clients, users, or some other target group; the degree to which the program mission is achieved.

Service Quality: The degree to which customers are satisfied with a program, the accuracy or timeliness with which the service is provided, and other measures that focus on the merit of the service delivery *process* itself.

Efficiency: Outputs per unit of input, inputs per unit of output, savings achieved, and similar measures of how well resources are being used to produce goods and services.

Workload/Outputs: The amount of services provided, units produced, or work accomplished (output); or the external demand that drives County activities (workload).

Input: Resources used to produce an output or outcome, such as workyears or expenditures.

Notes: Special considerations and other information relevant to specific measures and/or data in the program measures display.

Explanation: A brief description of the program or program element, explaining the performance information provided by the program measures and its context (external influences, program changes, new initiatives, and other factors needed to interpret the results shown). A graph of a key result is sometimes included.

Program Partners in Support of Outcomes: Governmental departments and agencies and private sector organizations whose activities also affect the program's clients and results.

Major Related Plans and Guidelines: Legislation, planning documents, policy pronouncements, and other documentation that provide direction to program efforts.

Note that one should not place too much importance on how a particular program measure is classified. People (and governments) will sometimes differ on how to label a given measure. One of the key advantages to using a *family* of measures is that regardless of where a particular measure is entered on the program measures display, the family of measures format will provide a complete picture of the performance of the given program or program element. Whether one happens to classify an ambiguous item as an output, outcome, efficiency, or service quality measure is immaterial to most users as long as the information is relevant, important, accurate, and included *somewhere* on the program measures display.

The goal of *Montgomery Measures Up!* is to provide a comprehensive yet accurate picture of the performance of a program or program element from multiple perspectives, ranging from what it has cost (inputs) to what it has achieved (outcomes) and how efficient it has been in producing those results. This focus must not be lost in worrying about whether a particular measure should be listed under one category or another.

This document is available on the Web at
www.montgomerycountymd.gov/omb

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